



Exercise 3.1

Making the Link—Policy in the Interface



Public policies can influence the health, use, and management of natural resources and can affect the work of resource professionals. For resource professionals to assist decision makers with policy development, they must understand how policies affect a variety of natural resource issues. This introductory exercise asks participants to list a variety of resource-related policies. The discussion encourages participants to think about how the policies affect natural resources and resource management in the interface.

Objectives: Participants will be able to do the following:

1. List policies that influence natural resources.
2. Identify the role they and their agency could play in policy development.

Materials:

Presentation 3.1
Flip chart
Markers
Tape
Paper for notes

Time: 30 minutes

1. Before starting this exercise, label four flip-chart pages with the following topics and post them around the room (add more charts if there is an important topic specific to your region or if you are training an especially large group):
 - Forests
 - Water
 - Wildlife
 - Air quality
2. Divide the participants into four groups, assign each group to a page, and give each group a different colored marker. Present the corresponding slides for this exercise from **Presentation 3.1**. Ask them to list policies or regulations that determine resource management related to their topics. Give them about two or three minutes to list what they know and then ask each group to rotate to another list, taking their marker with them.
3. At the new list location they should read what the previous group wrote and continue brainstorming and adding to the list. Continue to rotate so each group contributes to all of the charts.

4. If you have time, you can do a second round. Ask your participants to consider the following and give them another minute or two at each station:
 - Policies set by different levels of government (federal, state, local, and neighborhood)
 - Policies that indirectly affect the resource, such as hurricane protection, road building, pet ordinances, nuisance weed ordinances, and estate taxes
 - Policies that influence private as well as public resource management
 - Policies that constrain or encourage development
 - Policies that affect urban settings as well as rural resources
5. When the groups have cycled through all four stations again, give your participants a chance to read the new additions to each page and then return to their seats. Ask them to comment on similarities, differences, and surprises on the lists of policies.

Point out that a variety of policies directly affect resources, and another huge list indirectly affects how resources can be managed and how they function. Use the following discussion questions to continue making relevant points:

- Which policies determine how landowners manage private resources? Which determine how agencies manage public resources?
- Which policies generate conflict in the wildland-urban interface, and which are designed to resolve conflict? Who is involved in resolving that conflict? What, if anything, has been done to address conflicts? What could be done in the future?
- What type of policies do you initially think about with regard to resources; what policies do not occur to you initially? What kinds of assumptions do you make about resources and policy?
- Which policies determine how development is designed and situated?
- Which policies have been developed recently and by whom?
- What type of policy should have your agency's input when it is being written or debated?

Optional: If you have a group that is knowledgeable about policy, you might divide the space on each chart into four quadrants before they get started. Label each quadrant with a different level of government (federal, state, local (county/city), and neighborhood) and ask them to organize the policies they list by government level.

Summary

In order to begin thinking about the role of natural resource professionals in the policy-development process, it is helpful to be reminded of the great diversity of policies that are already in place and how they influence natural resources in the wildland-urban interface. Understanding how policies affect community development, industry, recreation, and public land management, for example, is essential in helping participants grasp the importance of assisting policy makers.